iCON News

No. 4+5/2009

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iTCC reports: Round 4 + 5

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iTCC
ICON TOURING CAR CHAMPIONSHIP

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Editorial:

Hi racers!

The iCON News office has been really busy the last couple of weeks, and so we had to postpone the 4th issue of this magazine. Now I am proud to present this 'double issue' of iCON News.

In this month's issue, the iCON Racing Team turns one! A bit of history - on 15th May 2008, Darren 'Dazza' Taylor announced the iCON Team to the LFS community. Since this day, much has happened. Members have joined and left, got married, a couple of leagues were entered and raced in, and at the beginning of 2009, Joe created the iTCC, a league which has become very famous in the last few months.

iCON celebrates its birthday with the '**ITO**' (*iCON turns one*) event, more information inside.

On this note, we say a big 'THANK YOU' to our drivers, friends, RaceSIM servers and the LFS community, for the support and the nice races/leagues/meetings we have had. Hopefully we will celebrate a lot of iCON birthdays together.

rFactor? Hmmmm.. For myself, I have read a lot about it, but what is it like? Finally, I gave into temptation and I bought rFactor and tested it a little bit, offline and online. Look inside to read my experiences and my honest opinion of the game.....

Kind regards

Tom

'Hot in the (South) City' - iTCC round 4

After a break (for Joe's wedding), the iTCC returned with Round 4 of the Championship at South City. The track with its tricky corners and walls promised a lot of action and needed the driver's full concentration.

Qualifying/Shootout:

Due to the lack of entrants for Round 4, all competitors from the shootout were allowed to take part in the main event. The qualifying was won by Fredrik Enersen from the CoRe team, only 0.02 sec in front of Rik de Jong and 0.04 sec from Phil Diaz, also from the CoRe Team – all in all a very close qualifying session with great lap times from many drivers. The championship leader Nolan Scott was able to put his car into 6th place on the grid and Rudy van Buren, second in the championship, put his car into 10th place.

Race 1:

With a great start, de Jong was able to take the lead after the first corner which surprisingly was cleanly took by all drivers, displaying great awareness and skill. On the back straight was there was an incident with de Souza involved, but all drivers were able to continue. De Jong held the lead until the end of the race, followed by 3(!) CoRe cars, trying in vain to catch him. Due to an incident on lap 13, the Safety Car was deployed and

so the race ended with a Safety Car period. At the end of the race, Rik de Jong won with a gap of 0.25 sec to Enersen and 0.38 to Diaz.

Race 2:

R.de Jong started from the pole, followed by Enersen and Diaz. He was able to defend his first place throughout the whole of the first lap, but at the end of this lap Enersen tried to pass him. Both cars entered the first corner side by side, but again de Jong was the winner of this battle.

Outside of the podium places, van Buren and Scott fought hard for 4th place; ths time it was van Burens who was the winner, as he passed Scott and took 4th place. But winning this place came at a price, as van Buren received a 5-point penalty after a steward's investigation. Then bad luck for Scott when he suffered a disconnect on lap 13, when he was in 5th place. Here again the "curse" of the iTCC struck - if you are in the top 10, disconnections seem to strike without warning.

On the 9th lap, Diaz passed Enersen at the start/finish straight and after 14 laps, de Jong won his second race this evening, followed by Diaz and Enersen. Van Buren finished in 4th place.

Race 3:

The iTCC "magic number" (which is the number of the reverse grid for Race 3), was 7 and so 7th place finisher from Race 2, D.Faurie, started from the pole, with Keough in 2nd and Vukovic in 3rd place. Faurie was able to defend his first place from the start line to the chequered flag and won this race. However, behind him, some great battles were raging, with a great pass on lap 5 as Diaz captured 3rd place, overtaking van Buren *and* Vuckovic on the back straight with an awesome manoeuvre – however right after that he lost his connection (the iTCC curse struck again...).

Van Buren assumed 3rd place, followed by Enersen and Ostgaard from the CoRe team. On the 7th lap, Enersen passed van Buren on the back straight In the following rounds the live stream viewers on iTCC TV saw a great battle for 3rd place between van Buren, Enersen and Ostgaard, which was won by van Buren, who re-took 3rd place on the 12th lap and started the chase for Keough in second place. And so it happened: van Buren caught Keough in the last lap and overtook him just before the start/finish straight - however Keuogh fought back with help from slipstreaming and both ran equal 2nd place through the finish line, followed by Ostgaard in 4th place.

iTCC Round 5 – Turning Japanese – Kyoto National Reverse

The 5th round of the iTCC was held at Kyoto. In the championship standings N. Scott and R. van Buren were ahead but of private commitments van Buren wasn't able to take part at this round. Would Nolan Scott increase the gap to his opponents?

Shootout and Qualifying:

There were again only 15 drivers in the shootout and so everyone of them qualified for the main iTCC event. Again, here at Kyoto, qualifying in the iTCC was very close, with pole position won in some style by Pickard from the (sadly closed) Mercury team, followed by Marques and Dolezal. In this qualifying session the first 24 drivers were within one second of pole! This means one mistake and you will sacrifice a lot of positions.

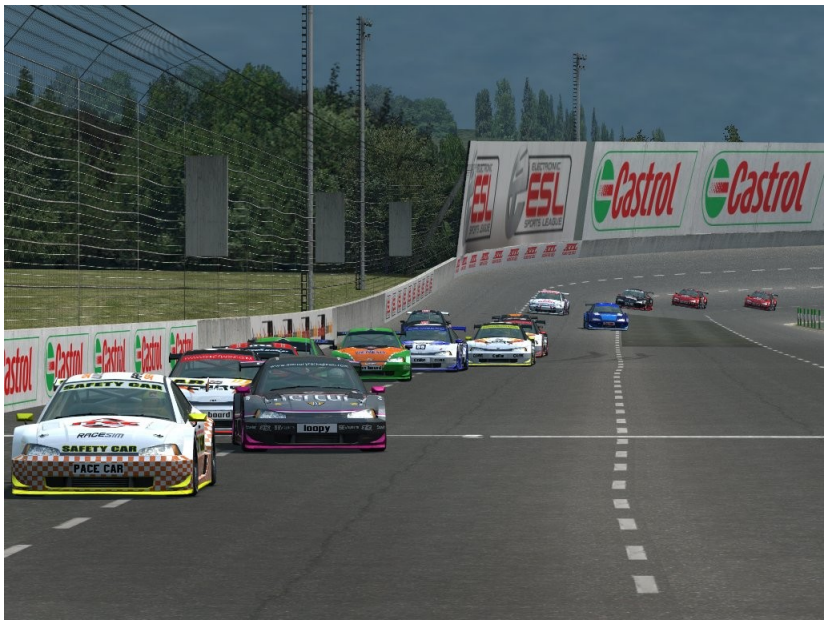
Race 1:

A great start from Marques, who took the lead, and Dolezal, who took second. Pickard fell down to 5th place. The whole field drove (mostly) clean without big incident through Turn 1, although Diaz was spun, but continued after recovering, in last place. Also a little incident with Atkinson from NDR but he didn't lost as many places. At the front there was a great battle between Marques and Dolezal, and after a mistake from Marques in the last corner of lap 1, Dolezal passed him and took the lead. Scott also passed Faurie and Marques to go into second place. At the end of lap two, Dolezal was hit by the "curse of iTCC" and lost connection when he was leading the race. Bad luck for him indeed, and

Scott took the lead. At the end of the 3rd lap Marques tried to overtake Scott just before the last few corners but he was too fast and ended up in the sand-trap. Meanwhile Pickard showed great pace and determination and climbed up the race order, position after position until finally on lap 10, he passed Scott on the start/finish straight, and defended his lead till the end of the race. Scott finished in 2nd and Faurie on 3rd place.

Race 2:

Pickard started again from the pole, but this time, he wasn't caught napping at the start and was able to defend his first place. Behind him were Scott and Oliveira. In the 3rd corner just before the back straight, Jourdainne spun and landed on his roof and the first (and only) Safety Car period began. As the green flag was shown, some drivers were too hasty and



overtook just before the start finish line, which was the reason for some protests after the race meeting. Pickard defended his first place and on his tail was Scott. Oliveira was in 3rd place. On the 5th lap Scott passed Pickard and took the lead. Behind them were great battles for the 5th - 10th positions with about 10 drivers circulating at the same pace. On the 6th lap Pickard recovered the lead and passed Scott again. Pickard, Scott and Oliveira showed great pace and skill till the end of the race and Pickard brought home his second win of the evening. Scott ended the race in second with Oliveira in 3rd place.

Race 3:

The "magic number" for race 3 was 9 and so Faurie started from pole, with Marques on second and Diaz from third place. There were a lot of hard battles and touches in the first lap, and Pavlovic took the lead up until the start/finish straight. Behind him CoRe teammates Ostgaard and Diaz started bump-drafting with perfect team-play and passed Pavlovic, who never stood a chance against the speed built up by the CoRe duo (Pardon the pun, AMD fanboys) . On the 7th lap, Dolezal overtook Pavlovic and assumed 3rd place. In the "midfield" (if it actually exists in this league) close racing was everywhere as drivers battled each other from turn to turn and from lap to lap throughout the whole race. After 13 laps of frantic racing, Ostgaard won his first race in the iTCC for CoRe racing followed by Diaz in 2nd and Dolezal in 3rd place. The championship leader Scott finished in 8th place.

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MoE finals

After six rounds full of action, the Masters of Endurance series finished in Blackwood GP. There was a close fight for the victory in GT1 and for the places in GT2.

Finally F1RST racing captured the Championship title in GT 1, followed by #low racing in 2nd and the (sadly closed) Mercury team in 3rd place.

In the GT2 class, F1RST racing also won the title and the spdo racing team got the 2nd place. The (amazing) battle for 3rd place was won by the AutoMotoTrke.net Sim Racing Team.

Congratulations to the winners and of course to all competitors and league organizers. A great league with very close race and very fast driving!

„LEFT, STRAIGHT, LEFT, STRAIGHT, LEFT,……."

One of the most popular single events held in LFS, has been announced: **the KY 500 from NDR**. A 500-mile oval race with the FO8, R2 (!) tires, a lot of slipstreaming, overtaking and the occasional Safety Car period, promises a lot of action and fun. The signups are still open, about 80 driver want to be there, but only 30 slots left for this 'adrenalin rush'.

To all drivers who think oval racing is easy: with R2 tires on the car (they last 5 laps if you don't handle them with care), 30 people around you at roughly the same pace, and about 300 km/h on straights, you will see how quickly you get sweaty hands.

But try it out yourself, on the (FM) OVAL JUNKIES 2 server. A bunch of good drivers are always on the server, and they will normally share their sets with you.

Going "down under"

Dear readers!

Today, I am in Melbourne, Australia, guest of Tobias Osterhouse, aka Laser 171107, team member of the iCON Team.

ICON NEWS: Hello Tobi!

First a few personal questions: How old are you, and what is your real life job?

Tobias Osterhouse: Well I am 17 years old, and I am still a full time student at school. I have a part-time job serving in an ice-creamery which is a quite laid-back job.

IN: How did you choose your LFS username?

TO: I quite like sailing, and my boat is called a 'Laser'. The number which this boat had assigned was the number 171,107 – therefore I chose this as my LFS username.

IN: Any hobbies aside of LFS?

TO: As I mentioned, I like to sail in my spare time but also enjoy playing soccer, tennis, play guitar and go out with mates on weekends when I am not too busy. So much to do so little time!

IN: Your favourite TV series, favourite music?

TO: Hmm, I quite enjoy the first series of the Australian show "Underbelly" and also "Top Gear". As for music, I enjoy rock and alternative music as well as a little bit of dance/techno/electronic style music. I like most old music from the 60's and 70's as well that was popular at the time, as long as the lyrics are not too stupid and girly.

IN: Since when do you play LFS, and in which teams has you been?

TO: Well I first started to play LFS demo version in January 2006. I did many laps of Blackwood in the days when it was XFG, XRG and XRT – got bored of this and couldn't help but purchase the full version. I still can't believe how good the game is, one of the best sims I have ever driven. When it comes to teams I was part of the so called Nitrous "Team" in early 2008; it consisted of a very young leader who appeared to recruit anyone with lots of CTRA points and a positive attitude. I left this team after two months, not long before they

liquidated. I then drove solo for the rest of 2008 as I did not have much time for LFS until November. Now it is a much better story with 4 of the ex-members in our current team, iCON Racing (I joined at the start of January 2009). I am really enjoying the good close racing and friendly feeling at iCON – we have a good balance of drivers and everyone has a good life outside of LFS which I think is very important.

IN: Your favourite number, car and track in LFS, and why?

TO: My personal favourite race number – 05 (Australian race legend Peter Brock's number) or otherwise 5 and 22. Track-wise I really enjoy the Westhill circuit as it flows so well on a good lap and also Aston Club which is quite a fun sprint track. In terms of cars I enjoy the FBM & FOX for their responsiveness and having such great grip. In terms of tin-tops I prefer the FXR, FZR for their great speed or the XFR for close front-wheel drive action!

IN: Your best and your worst situation on a LFS Server?

TO: I have two equally great moments in LFS – winning one of the OoCR Saturday Night Enduros in late 2007 (Formula XR @ AS Club) which was a 2 hour race. The other was scoring a point in the warm-up round of the iTCC at Aston circuit. Worst moment would have to be flipping iCON's FZR entry in the early stages of the IGTC qualifier round (Blackwood GP) – ruining our teams hopes of taking part in the season and destroying our car we had worked on for hours before the event!

IN: Your next projects in real life?

TO: My main goals for the future are to complete my schooling with a good enough final exam score to attain a spot in university for perhaps a Bachelor of Commerce degree. Other than this, maintain good fitness and perform well in the national championships of my boat class in December this year.

IN: Your chance: something you ever wanted to say to the LFS community?

TO: iCON Racing is a great team! We have many different contracts for suitable candidates – if you think you fit the bill then apply today!

IN: Thank you for your time, good luck for your future races.

TO: Thank you and it was a pleasure, anytime.

spdo GP 2 series

Spdo Racing announced a GP2 series with the FO8 car. For the iCON team, Tom Madl started in the first round, at Kyoto National, but he wasn't able to score any points, due to the high level of speed and driving skills from the top drivers at the front. Anyway, there were 2 good races with a seldom-used car, with great passes and close battles. The sign-ups for this league are always open from round to round, so anybody can jump into the league at any point of the season.

Let's rock and roll (the UFR) - The UF Summer slam

We've all waited anxiously for this moment – but now it's true: Concept Racing Team have announced the 'UF Summer Slam' with all UF cars: the UF1, UFR and the well-known UF-BR (45% air-intake restriction, for those drivers from Mars and beyond). The tracks are well thought out with South City, Aston, Kyoto and 2 rally tracks(!). Last years' UF-BR season was a lot of fun with fast, fair and clean drivers, very good adminning and a great level of organisation. iCON itself will start with two teams, and we will report from every round.

This league will be a lot of fun, so sign up for close racing with fantastic cars in a well prepared and organized league.

ITO – The iCON birthday event

The ICON Racing Team is now 1 year old (ITO) and so we proudly announce our birthday event on Friday 19th June 2009. We celebrate it with a race at Aston North – the race itself is 2 hours long and uses one of the best balanced car combos, the XFG and XRG. The sign-ups are open on the LFS forum - unfortunately there are only places left on the reverse list. But we will also broadcast this event and we will try our hardest to have the commentary box of the iTCC - Dekojester, Passo and Boothy imparting their knowledge and getting excited as they comment on the racing.

So put this one on your calendar and try to be there!

The end of OWT

Question of the month: Why are some leagues dying?

After a good start with sign-ups, and a first round at KY National, the Open Wheel Trophy (OWT) ended without the planned final round. There were less and less drivers from round to round, and at the end there were only 6 drivers on the grid. From the 2 classes of racing at the beginning of the series, the FO8 class was then cancelled and all drivers were in the FOX class. Our drivers, ICON TOM, finished in 3rd place and ICON JOE finished in 8th place in this league.

But why is a (good) concept dying? I surfed through the LFS forum and I saw a lot of leagues and Championships dying during the season. Now I have tried to find out something about this and have come to these (not really surprising) conclusions:

Bad organizing: If a league is badly organized, it WILL die. Organizing a league is sometimes a full-time job and you cant do it all alone. Ask somebody to help you, share the work with others! If there is nobody to care about the drivers, results, races and so on, IT WILL DIE. It's disappointing to write a PM or a post and then receive no reply.

Decreasing show up of drivers: If a league is bad organized, the drivers will leave. They would not say: 'Hey, I can't do it today' or 'I'm pulling out of this league' ... They will just say nothing, they won't show up and they won't answer the admin's PMs. However, in every league I've raced in until now, the driver numbers do dwindle during the season. Sometimes it's due to the driver getting no points with no chance to get a good position, but sometimes it's due to the league not being interesting.

Changes during the season: ATTENTION! DANGER! Changes during the season are very difficult and dangerous. A lot of drivers will see this as bad organizing and will leave. Every league organizer should be very, very careful with any changes they implement during a league season.

Track/car combo: The next difficult point. Some leagues are dying cause of a bad track/car combo. The car is very important, but some will say the track is also very important. Both are right. With the UF1 at Fern Bay Black, as seen as in the NDR Easter event, the racing could be fun, provided a full grid is in attendance of course; whereas with 8 UF1 at FE Black it could be beyond boring! On the other hand 8 UF1 in South City classic, or at Fern Bay Rallycross, a lot of fun is guaranteed.
If you chose the LX6 for example instead of the FXR, less drivers might show up due to the LX6 requiring a driver of greater skill. On the other hand, you might attract a higher calibre of driver, albeit you would have less drivers. It's all about good selection of track/car. Select a track/car combo, discuss and try it out with your friends and teammates, and then choose.

These are my opinions, I am not the best organizer in the LFS community and honestly, organizing a league or event is all about teamwork. Put together your ideas, suggestions and opinions and you will run a good league for sure. Ask the admins of other well-run leagues and events for their help or suggestions, and you will get an answer, I am sure. But also accept (fair) criticism and try to sort out the issues that arise.

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rFactor: A little test – A story of my first test (no advert!)

After thinking about it for a few months, I visited an online retailer and ordered rFactor on DVD for about 20€. The delivery delays meant I waited about 2 weeks until the moment arrived when I could hold it in my hands.
After I installed the latest version (1.255 if I recall correctly), I started rFactor. On the first sight a clean user interface, not complicated at all with 3 main buttons. A lot of cars and tracks on it, so select a car and.... what? Damn - I have to buy it? WTF? After I saw the (virtual) 'price' for it, I bought the rFactor prototype and went out onto the track.

At first, I didn't know what to do (of course I didn't read the user manual, I am male!), and so I reluctantly grabbed the user 'manual' and read about the buttons and preferences.... boooooooooooring.... I want to drive!! Finally, I jumped into the car and pressed down on the throttle. Automatic shifting was activated and so the car drove alone through the pit lane. Leaving the pit lane, the limiter was switched off automatically and the car accelerated. Woah, what a very different car feeling to LFS! I managed a few laps and then selected new cars and new tracks for the next 2 hours, with a lots of crashes, damage and mistakes ..... Does rFactor offer a more realistic car feeling than LFS? Honestly, I've never driven a Stock Car or any other race car in real life, so I don't know really. But the sound is very very nice.....

The main part of rFactor is the community , but not so familiar like in LFS, its more a technical community. The users are able to create their own modifications with cars and tracks, which can be downloaded from rFactor central. Looking for a league, I decided to try out the Driven By Passion guys (dbp), who I know from other LFS leagues, and their league named 'French Connection', using the EuroCup Renault Megane with French tracks. OK, signed up in round 3, downloaded the required files (mod and track, about 250 MB), put them into the right folders, then restart and surprise, its starts like a new game, new loading screen, new car and track. With a little time spent searching, I also found the original cars again….

I then tested the Megane offline, once happy with the car I asked for the password and jumped in.....Hmmmm..... Looking at the host list, some servers appeared, some disappeared and so I clicked three or four times on the 'refresh' button till I saw the DBP server, double clicked, entered the password and ..... I'm online!! ..... finally. (I think the reason for the appearing/disappearing servers is due to the huge amount of servers online....)

We started the 3rd round of the French Connection league with 5 drivers at 'Rouen' (name of a short track in France) and began with free practice. Another difference to LFS - there is no chat possible while you sit in the car. We all were on TS and so the conversation was easy, but with a league and race-control I'm not sure...

For myself, I managed good times at the track, but suddenly one of the drivers sent a setup to me. Ah, I said 'Thank you' but now what? Where is the set? After searching in the 'box' screen through all the folders which contain sets, I found the folder 'received setups'.... ahhhhhhh.... I clicked on it, and loaded the set. Now this set was loaded and after a couple of laps, it felt better than my other one.

After two rounds (2 rounds of qualifying and 4 races), I can say, rFactor is an alternative to LFS. Its up to you to like or hate rFactor, from my point of view, its a good game, probably not a 'Racesim' but also not an arcade racing game.

This highlights a strength of LFS - the community in LFS is more familiar, after a few months spent surfing through the LFS forum, you will find the same names, and if you write a PM to the "top poster" or "top driver/movie maker" and so on, you normally get an answer and help, for sure.

At this point I would like to say "thank you" to the DBP guys, who helped me and let me test the rFactor game a little bit online.

Servers are available from RaceSim servers (http://servers.racesim.co.uk/), Leagues are organized by the Driven by Passion team (http://www.drivenbypassion.org).

This was my first test of rFactor, my testing is not over yet - in a few months I will report my full opinions about this game.